



ECEAP



An Investment in our Future



December 2009

Welcome to the 2008-2009 Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) Outcomes Report.

ECEAP is a free, comprehensive, family focused school-readiness program preparing three- and four-year-old children for school, while teaching parents the tools they need to raise healthier children.

It is the dedication of the people working in this program, as well as the commitment of the participating families, that create the positive results you find inside these pages.

The earlier we prepare children and families for school, the more successful they will be; ultimately benefiting themselves and this community. These are Snohomish County's workers, leaders and decision-makers of tomorrow. We have a responsibility to be sure they're prepared.

I thank you for your interest in this report and our ECEAP Program. Together, we can build a better future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron Reardon", is positioned above the printed name.

Aaron Reardon
County Executive
Snohomish County

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ECEAP—An Investment in our Future

Snohomish County Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program 2008-2009 Outcomes

Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon has identified early childhood education as one of the most important investments we can make. He has described ECEAP as “an important service that gives children a better start in life and parents the tools they need to raise healthier children.” According to Reardon, “Children are our future. We need to do everything possible to make their start a positive one.” Snohomish County ECEAP served more than 1,125 children and their families at 21 sites in Snohomish and Skagit counties last year by providing a comprehensive preschool program integrating education, family support and health services.

Our program includes these curricula:

- ***Creative Curriculum*** provides high quality, emergent programs of study that are both developmentally appropriate and strength-based.
- ***Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)*** is a comprehensive, child-centered assessment that is designed to promote resiliency in young children by strengthening protective factors including attachment, initiative and self-control, which, in turn, typically leads to a reduction in behavioral concerns.
- ***Second Step Violence Prevention Curriculum*** is designed to reduce aggressive behavior and increase social competence in children.
- ***Talking About Touching Curriculum*** teaches basic rules and skills for protective action in a variety of dangerous situations (car, traffic, and fire safety lessons).



Cognitive and Language Skills

Snohomish County ECEAP uses *The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum* to assess growth and development in children. Per ECEAP Performance Standards, two assessments were completed on each of the 807 children who were present in the Fall of 2008 and Spring 2009.

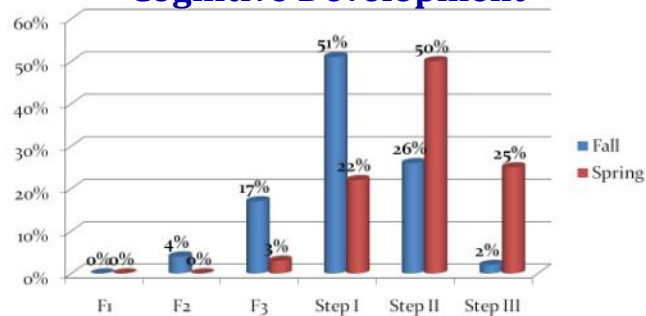


Teachers observe children as they participate in everyday activities and assess their progress on objectives as the following:

- Forerunner levels describe children who are not yet at the initial level of typical preschool development but show beginning evidence of developing the skill;
- Step I approximates a beginning level of typical preschool development, and;
- Steps II and III represent higher levels in acquiring the particular skill.¹

This report shows progress on the continuum in two different areas: Cognitive Development and Language Development.

Cognitive Development



Many children progressed in Cognitive Development objectives with 75 percent of children falling into either the Step II or III levels in Spring 2009.

¹ From The Creative Curriculum Developmental Areas Report, July 2009.

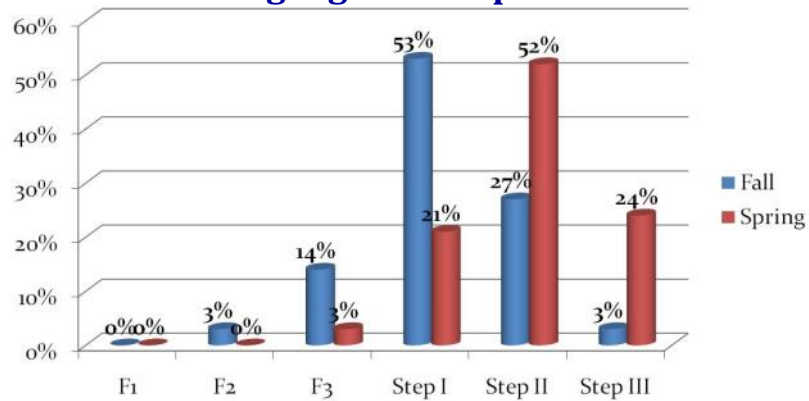
Cognitive development helps children acquire thinking skills. Children are not only learning knowledge, skills and concepts, but also acquiring the “learning to learn” skills that are so important for future learning.²

We practice solving problems, encouraging children to ask questions and use their knowledge in new ways. We encourage logical thinking by offering children the opportunity to sort materials, classify, count and make comparisons. We invite children to use their imagination to show and represent what they have learned and participate in pretend play. Math is more than recognizing numbers and counting. We offer children the opportunity to understand what the numeral “5” represents and they have many opportunities to sort and organize objects by color, size and number, to follow steps in picture recipes and to use measuring spoons and cups during cooking activities.



² Dodge, D. T., Colker, L. J., & Heroman, C. (2006). *A Teacher's Guide To Using The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment System*. Washington DC: Teaching Strategies , Inc.

Language Development



Many children progressed in Language Development objectives, with 76 percent of children falling in either the Step II or Step III levels in Spring 2009.

A solid foundation in language development gives children the skills they need to become successful learners. Children who have rich language and literacy experiences in preschool are more likely to develop strong language and literacy skills.³

Language Development encourages children to begin to recognize letters and words and a favorite place to begin is with their names. We read to children every day and have books available that reflect the children's interests and what is being studied. We sing songs, recite poems and read books that play with words so children can explore sounds and learn the meaning of new words. We help children begin to understand the meaning of print and the purpose of writing that is used to convey messages. We offer children the opportunity to use crayons, markers and pencils to develop early writing skills.

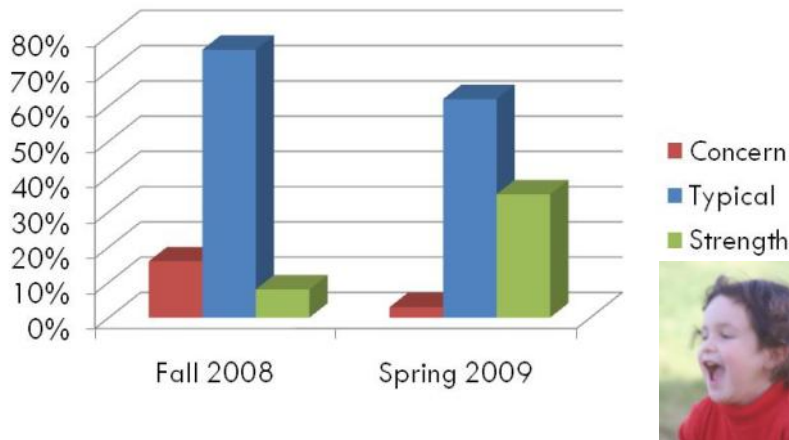


³ Ibid

Social-Emotional Skills

The DECA, a strength-based, family-inclusive, social/emotional assessment and planning tool is also very useful as an outcome measure related to children's social and emotional health. Based on the resilience theory, DECA measures three within child protective factors: **initiative** (*the ability to use independent thought and action to meet his or her needs*), **attachment** (*the mutual, strong, and long-lasting relationship between a child and a significant adult*) and **self-control** (*the ability to experience a range of feelings and express them using words and actions society considers appropriate*). Children with strong protective factors are more likely to adjust to and recover from misfortune or change and are better able to adapt to new challenges. By comparing changes over time for an individual child, or for an entire group of children, the DECA can evaluate the effectiveness of primary prevention and/or early intervention efforts. DECA results from the 2008-2009 school year indicate significant progress in strengthening protective factors and in reducing behavioral concerns.

Percent of ECEAP Children Using Initiative



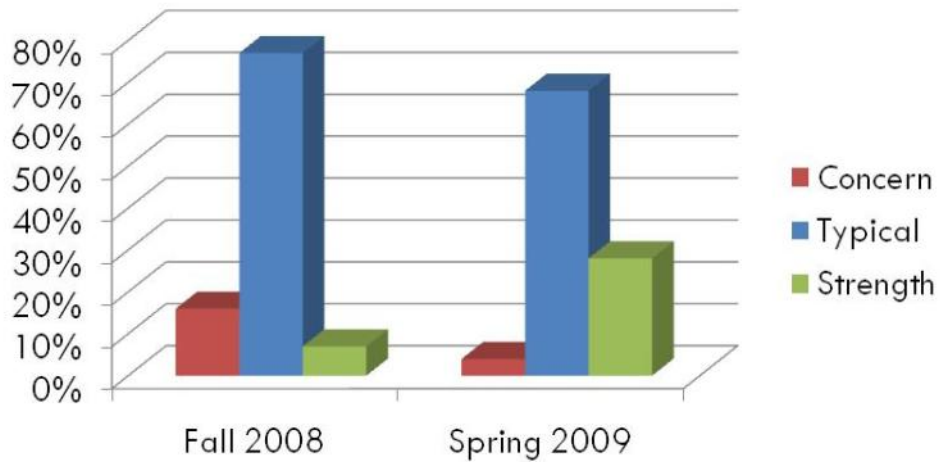
The number of children with typical levels of initiative decreased as many children moved from the **typical** category to the **strength** category.

The number of children exhibiting **strength** in initiative **increased** from **8%** to **35%**.

During the
2008-2009
School
Year:

The number of children with serious **concerns** in initiative **decreased** from **16%** of ECEAP children to **3%**.

Percent of ECEAP Children Experiencing Attachment



During the 2008-2009 School Year:

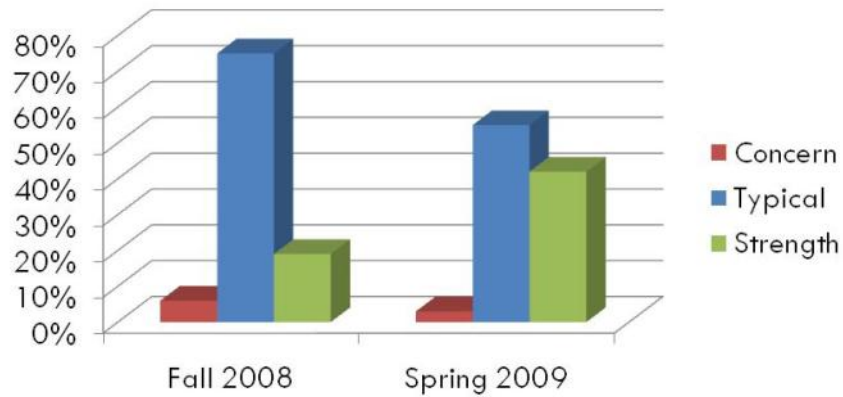
The number of children with typical levels of attachment decreased slightly as many children moved to the strength category while many from the concerns category moved into the typical category.

Children exhibiting **strength** in attachment **increased** from 7% to 28%.

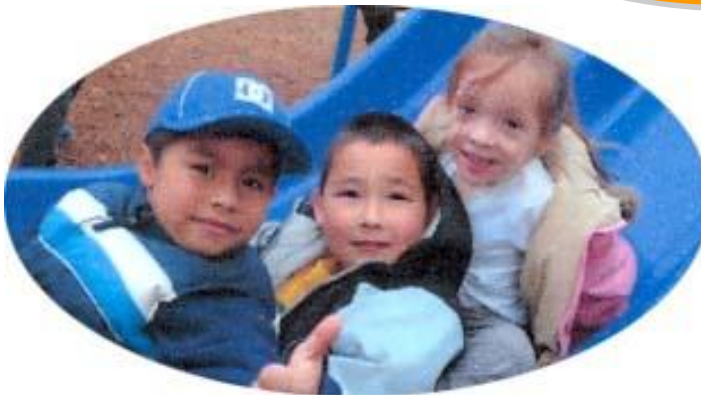
Serious attachment **concerns** decreased from 16% of ECEAP children to 4%.



Percent of ECEAP Children with Self-Control



During the
2008-2009
School Year:



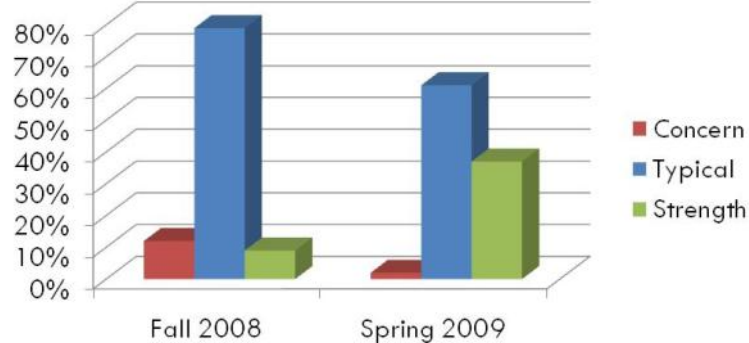
Children exhibiting
strength in
self-control
increased from
19% to 42%.

Serious
concerns in
self-control
decreased from **6%** of
ECEAP
children to **3%.**

The number of children
with **typical** levels of self-control
decreased as many children
moved from the **typical** category
to the **strength** category.

*Children who are successful in their early years
will be better able to achieve higher education and job training as adults.*
(WA State Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 2007)

DECA Total Protective Factors



During the 2008-2009 school year:

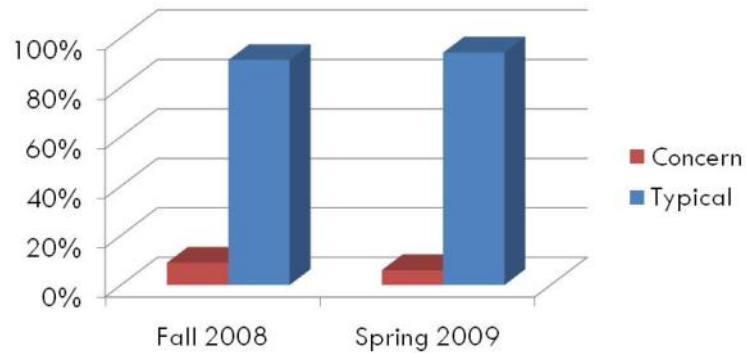
Children moved from the typical category
into the strength category.

The number of
children whose
**total protective
factors** were rated as
**concern,
decreased**
from **12%** of ECEAP
children to **2%.**



The number of children whose total protective factors
were rated as **strength increased** from
9% → 37%.

Percent of ECEAP Children with Behavioral Concerns



During the **2008-2009** School Year:



Significant behavioral concerns reduced from 9% (89 children) to 6% (59 children).

It is important to note that changes in behavior take place gradually over time and are not as likely to increase as significantly as with the protective factor categories.

A child's experiences through age five lay the cognitive, social and emotional foundations for success in school and life.

Health and Nutrition

Health Care Institute

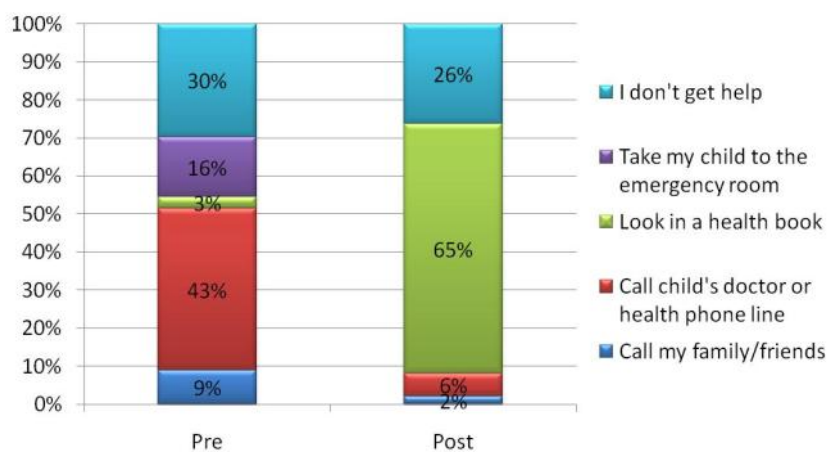
In the 2008-2009 school year Snohomish County ECEAP implemented the UCLA and Johnson & Johnson Health Care Institute. The project was a valuable partnership dedicated to improving the health-care knowledge of our families.

The primary goals of the project were to educate and train parents to:

- recognize and address common health problems at home;
- know when to call a health-care provider;
- minimize and possibly avoid costly medical bills; and
- learn how to effectively communicate with a health-care provider.

More than 440 ECEAP families participated in 20 trainings held throughout Snohomish County. Each received a health-care reference book, first-aid kit and digital thermometer along with several other incentives. In the months following the training, ECEAP family support staff followed up with families to determine how the program helped them address their child's health-care needs. Statistics reflected a dramatic decrease in doctor and emergency room visits for common childhood illnesses such as low-grade fevers and a significant increase in parent use of health books as a first resource, rather than calling a physician or visiting the emergency room, when their child became ill.

When your child is sick, where do you first go to get help?



Medical/Dental Exams

More than 99 percent of all children enrolled in the program were fully immunized or exempt from immunizations, and 98 percent of the children received medical and dental exams while in the program.



Parents are more likely to participate when staff value, expect and invite them to be involved.

(Harvard Family Research Project, 2009)

Basic Food Nutrition and Education Program (BFNEP)

Focusing on healthy eating habits, BFNEP provided three different activities to help families develop wise nutritional choices. “Families Eating and Sharing Together” (FEAST) encourages a sit-down meal with the family. “Community Homemade Options for Wellness” (CHOW) provides an opportunity for parents to create nutritionally sound cookbooks, and “Children’s Home to School Project” (CHOMP) are activities families use at home.

- FEAST was implemented at five ECEAP sites and more than 530 families participated.
- CHOW was implemented at four sites and more than 420 families received cookbooks.
- CHOMP projects were used at all ECEAP sites. More than 3,475 activity kits were distributed, reaching nearly 10,400 individuals.



Family Support

Snohomish County ECEAP offers a variety of programs and services dedicated to supporting the families of children in the program. Family support staff work in partnership with families to identify family strengths and needs, set goals and follow-up on progress toward those goals, access resources and coordinate transitions between ECEAP and home, childcare and kindergarten. During the 2008 – 2009 school year, 9,386 professional referrals were provided to ECEAP families, helping them progress toward their goals and obtain services from appropriate community resources.

Family events are also a vital element in providing excellent Family Support Services. Site program staff plan monthly events focused on connecting families with one another while enjoying fun and educational activities together. In 2008-2009, more than 500 family events were offered, including Dr. Seuss Literacy Nights, Heritage Nights, Snohomish County Imagine Children's Museum-On-the-Go, Multicultural Fairs, Family Night Out (an activity-based family enrichment curriculum), Luaus, Fiestas, Boxcar Derbies, "Dessert and Dancing" and many, many more. More than 16,175 people attended family events in 2008 and 2009.

Parent education is another key component of ECEAP's Family Support Services. Our programs strive to offer parents educational opportunities based upon their expressed interests and needs. In 2008-2009

topics included child development, safety, child guidance, kindergarten readiness, English language learners, leadership and advocacy, communication skills and many more. More than 3,000 parents attended the Parent Education Activities offered by the various Snohomish County ECEAP sites.

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*Family engagement
promotes a range of
benefits for students,
including improved
school readiness,
higher student
achievement, better
social skills/behavior
and increased
likelihood of high school
graduation.*
(Harvard Family
Research Project, 2009)

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Donations

During the 2008-2009 program year, Snohomish County ECEAP leveraged more than \$1.9 million in community support - including funding from tribes and school districts to provide additional services - other contributions (i.e., space, administrative support, transportation costs, etc.) and volunteer and community donations.

Conclusion

Snohomish County's future prosperity and security begins with the well-being of our children. We know that a child's experiences through age five lay the cognitive, social and emotional foundations for success in school and life. Data show that one dollar invested in high-quality pre-k returns up to eight dollars to taxpayers through higher graduation rates and lifetime earnings, decreased incarceration and a reduced need for costly remedial education.

This outcomes' report demonstrates that Snohomish County's ECEAP Program is producing positive results for children and families. We are providing a solid foundation for responsible citizenship, economic productivity, strong communities, sustainable democracy and a healthy adult population. We are supporting our families and preparing our children for kindergarten and life.

Quality early childhood education is proven to provide children with a strong educational foundation so that they enter school ready to learn, do well, graduate high school on time, attend college or job training programs and get good jobs.

For more information, contact
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